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ABSTRACT

This booklet presents findings of a study that gathered information about charter schools. Representatives of more than 170 public charter schools were surveyed by mail, telephone or at national and regional meetings. Approximately 120 surveys were returned by representatives of 110 charter public schools in seven states--California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Wisconsin. Findings indicate that most charter schools were small; the mean size was 287 students. Two-thirds of the schools were designed to serve a cross-section of students, and 56 percent were designed to serve at-risk students. The most frequently cited academic focus was "integrated interdisciplinary curriculum," followed by "technology" and "back to basics." The most common methods of reporting student progress included standardized tests, student portfolios, parent surveys, and student demonstrations of mastery. The biggest barriers to starting a charter school were lack of startup funds, finances, and problems with facilities. Respondents offered the following advice to those considering operating a charter school: (1) establish a clear vision and mission; (2) allot plenty of time for planning; and (3) be prepared to work hard. They also urged legislators to provide sufficient autonomy for the schools via contracts with groups other than local school districts, direct state funding, and freedom from local labor-management agreements. Thirty tables are included. Appendices contain a copy of the survey and an excerpt from an April 1995 "Policy Brief" on charter school activities across the United States. (LMI)

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CHARTER SCHOOLS

What are they up to?

CENTER FOR SCHOOL CHANGE

ECS EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE STATES

A 1995 Survey

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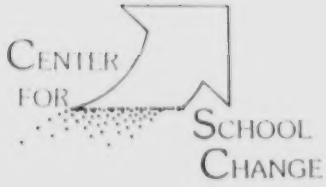
CHARTER SCHOOLS . . .
What are they up to?
A 1995 SURVEY

Education Commission of the States

and

Center for School Change
Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs
University of Minnesota



August 1995

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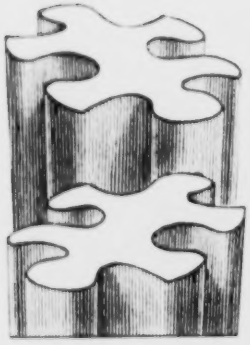

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The Center for School Change is a program of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. The mission of the Center for School Change is to work with communities to help produce significantly higher student achievement, increase the graduation rate, improve student attitudes toward learning and their schools, and build stronger working relationships among educators, parents and other community members. The center seeks to be a catalyst for changing attitudes, influencing policy and stimulating new public school models.

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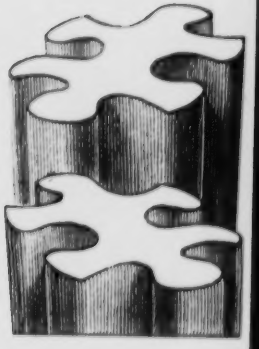

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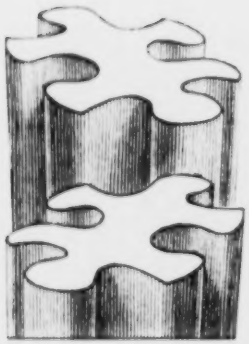
At the Humphrey Institute, Joe Nathan directed the research with the help of research assistants Jennifer Power and Monishe Mosley, who helped interview charter school operators, and Sue Finnegan and Betty Radcliffe, who helped tally results. The Humphrey Institute research effort was supported by the General Mills Foundation and the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundations. The conclusions are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect the views of these foundations.

The authors also would like to acknowledge the people in the charter schools who took the time to respond to our survey. Answering these many questions was not an insignificant task. Based on what they told us, these people are obviously very busy. To those who responded to our survey and interviews, thank you very much.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

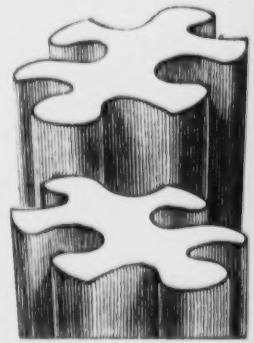
People around the nation are asking about charter public schools — what are they, where are they operating, how are they working? This study, conducted by the Education Commission of the States (ECS) and the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, was designed to gather and share the best available information about these schools.

The study describes the experiences of 110 charter public schools in seven states (California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico and Wisconsin). The schools enroll approximately 27,500 students.

At the time of the survey, Arizona had recently approved charter legislation and had given initial approval to some schools. However, because it was unclear which schools would actually be approved, Arizona was not included in this survey. Hawaii had approved one school that was surveyed but declined to respond. Some 67% of the charter schools authorized and operating in the other seven states responded to the survey. Key findings include:

- Most charter schools are small: the mean size is 287 students. If California is not included in the count, the mean size is 140 students.
- Two-thirds (73) of the schools are designed to serve a cross-section of students.
- One-half (56) are designed to serve "at-risk" students.
- The most frequently cited academic focus for charters is "integrated interdisciplinary curriculum." The second most popular focus is "technology," followed by "back to basics."
- The most frequently cited reasons for chartering a school were "better teaching and learning for all kids," "running a school according to certain principles and philosophy" and "exploring innovative ways of running a school."
- "Leased commercial space" is the most frequent description used to describe the charter schools' location.
- Charter schools use a variety of ways to report student progress. The most common are standardized tests and student portfolios, parent surveys and student demonstrations of mastery.
- The biggest barriers in starting a charter school are lack of start-up funds, finances and problems with facilities.
- In advising others who may consider operating a charter school, respondents recommended: "Establish a clear vision and mission," "give plenty of time to planning" and "be prepared to work hard."
- In advising legislators, charter school operators urged them to provide significant autonomy for the schools via contracts with groups other than the local districts, direct funding from the state and freedom from local labor-management agreements. They also suggested legislatures should provide start-up grants and make sure the legislation is clear.

For further information on charter schools, contact Alex Medler, policy analyst, ECS, 707 17th Street, Suite 2700, Denver, CO 90202-3427, 303-299-3635, or Joe Nathan, director of the Center for School Change, 301 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612-626-1834.



INTRODUCTION

Charter schools are one of the fastest growing innovations in education policy. Since 1991, 18 states have passed legislation authorizing these independent public schools. As of April 1995, more than 200 charter schools had received preliminary approval nationwide. Approximately 110 were up and running by spring.

Charter schools operate independently of local school districts and are designed to exist outside of most rules and regulations. A charter is essentially a contract, negotiated between those people starting the school and the official body in the state empowered to approve the charter.

The charter spells out how the school will be run, what will be taught, how success will be measured and what outcomes will be achieved by the students attending the school. As long as the school meets the terms of its charter, it is free from many of the rules and regulations under which other public schools must operate. And unlike other schools, if a charter school fails to meet these conditions, its charter can be revoked.

A charter proposal is written by a team of individuals interested in establishing the new school. Charters have been granted to parents, teachers, community groups and other organizations.

The entity that approves a charter varies from state to state. In some states, it is the state superintendent; in others, local school boards have the power to approve or disapprove a charter application. Some states, such as Michigan, allow institutions of higher education to approve charters.

After approval, the charter school then receives per-pupil funding at or near the level of funding a student in that district would have received in a traditional school.

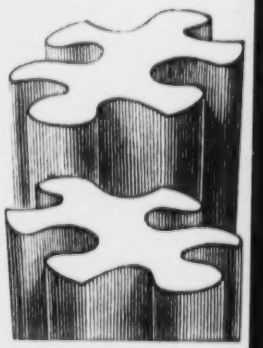
Charter schools:

- Must be nonsectarian
- Are not allowed to violate rules and regulations governing civil rights or health and safety issues
- May not charge tuition
- In most cases, are not allowed to use admission requirements.

Legislation authorizing these new schools varies from state to state. (For a brief description of state differences in legislation, see Appendix B.) The legislation differs in the following areas:

- Number of schools allowed to become charters
- Agencies that approve charters
- Who may apply for charters
- Amount of autonomy from local districts given to charter schools
- Degree of deregulation allowed.

These various approaches to charters lead to differences in the kinds of charter schools that emerge. Most of the analysis of charter schools to date has focused on the legislation and the legislative intent of different states. Until now, it has been too early to say what these schools actually look like. It is still too early to ask how they are doing. But as more and more charters gain approval, it is time to begin asking what these schools look like and what the people operating them are trying to do.



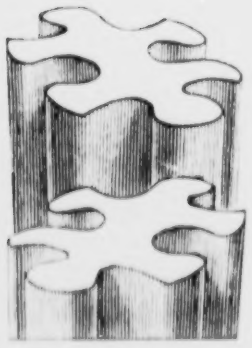
Charter schools are not intended just to produce a handful of new schools. The concept is designed to encourage school districts to respond with broader districtwide changes. In some states, districts have created new programs in response to the adoption of charter legislation or local charter applications.

Charter schools have generated immense interest. Policymakers, the media, academia and the general public have been searching for answers to basic questions about charter schools. To respond to these requests, ECS, in collaboration with the Center for School Change at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, conducted a national survey of the charter schools approved thus far. This document outlines the information gathered in that survey.

METHODS

In March 1995, ECS mailed a four-page survey to charter schools that had received approval in eight states. (For a complete copy of the original survey, see Appendix A.) Representatives of more than 170 schools were surveyed by mail, telephone or at national and regional meetings. Some 120 surveys were returned by representatives of 110 charter schools in seven states — the one school in Hawaii declined to respond to the survey.

These returns included more than 40 surveys filled out during telephone interviews by staff at the Center for School Change. Center staff also solicited comparative data for the charter schools' local districts from state departments of education and local districts through telephone interviews.



CAVEATS

The results of this survey should be considered with the following points in mind: In three of the states, survey return rates were below 80%. The survey respondents were self-selected from the approved schools and, in most cases, the data have not been corroborated by interviews or site visits.

Researchers commonly find self-reported data on school improvements to be significantly overstated. The amount of innovations going on in charter schools, for example, could be much lower than the figures listed. In some cases, answers to the questions were so ambiguous or contradictory that ECS and the center were unable to interpret the data. Thus, tables are missing for some of the questions.

Charter schools are also very new. In many cases, the issues around them are still being discussed and negotiated. Often, answers reflected the school operators' best guesses as to future operations. Consequently, the figures that follow have not been subjected to tests of statistical significance. They should be used only as crude measures of differences among states and as pointers toward emerging trends in charter school implementation.

Unless otherwise indicated, the numbers in each table are numbers of schools responding, not percentages.

A SURVEY OF APPROVED CHARTER SCHOOLS

NUMBER OF SURVEYS AND SCHOOLS INVOLVED								
	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Number of schools responding[1]	42	14	17	16	10	3	8	110
Number of schools approved (as of April 1, 1995)	82[2]	23	21	16	11[3]	4	8[4]	165
Number of schools allowed to be authorized according to legislation, as of April 1995	100	50	25	35	No limit[5]	5	10	225+
Percent of approved schools responding	51%	61%	81%	100%	90%	75%	100%	66%[6]

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[1] In several states, a single charter school returned more than one survey. In cases of multiple responses from a single school, the response by the person in the highest position of responsibility was used.

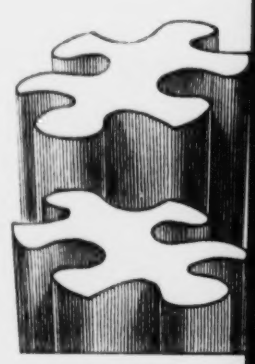
[2] One school in California and two in Colorado eventually decided not to open after receiving approval. The totals for California and Colorado, 82 and 23 respectively, do not include these schools.

[3] When Michigan's first charter school law was overturned, seven approved charter schools were officially designated as alternative schools under the administration of the intermediate school districts. No longer official charter schools, these schools nonetheless continued to operate. Under the second charter school bill, four schools were approved as of April 1995.

[4] Wisconsin's charter school legislation allowed districts to apply for charters and receive approval prior to any real planning activity. While 10 districts quickly gained approval, only eight currently plan to proceed with opening charter schools.

[5] Unlimited total. Seventy-five schools sponsored by universities, one per each community college, and no limit on local district-sponsored schools.

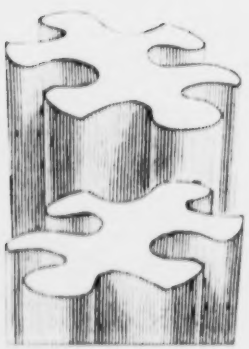
[6] For schools outside of California, this represents an 81% return rate.



1 WHAT GRADES DOES YOUR SCHOOL INCLUDE?[1]

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Elementary (K-6)	16	3	6	2	3	1	1	32
Middle (6-9)	7	4	2	0	2	1	3	19
Secondary (9-12+)	3	1	5	1	2	1	3	16
Elementary + middle (K-9)	6	3	2	5	2	0	0	18
Middle + secondary (6-12)	4	2	1	7	0	0	1	15
Elementary-secondary (K-12)	5	1	1	1	1	0	0	9

The grades served by charter schools vary widely. The greatest number of charter schools are designed to teach younger students. Charter schools use different student groupings than traditional grade levels. Several schools opened with only a few grades, expecting to expand the grades served each year. In the meantime, there are schools serving grades K-3, 2-5 and 7-10 and others that refuse to designate grades at all — indicating, for example, that their students are 16-21 years old.

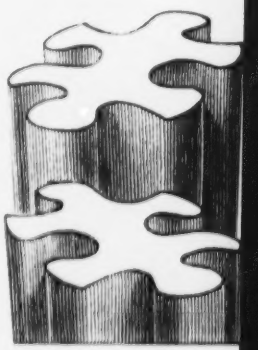


[1] Very few schools fit these grade ranges exactly. If they did not fit entirely within the boundaries of one of the first three definitions, they were included in the last three definitions — even if they did not cover the entire range of grades listed.

2 HOW MANY STUDENTS ARE IN YOUR SCHOOL?[8]

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
0-49	4	0	2	4	4	0	2	16
50-99	3	2	5	6	2	0	3	21
100-149	3	3	4	2	1	1	1	15
150-249	5	5	5	3	1	0	2	21
250-499	5	4	1	0	1	1	0	12
500-999	15	0	0	0	0	1	0	16
1000+	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Students	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Average
Mean	479	181	126	92	107	520	89	287[10]

Charter schools are smaller than the average public school. Charter schools are larger in California and New Mexico where existing schools often are converted to charter schools. But in the other states, charter schools are generally quite small.



Many schools listed multiple answers, either indicating current enrollment and planned enrollment, or in the case of schools that had yet to open, either no enrollment or expected enrollment. When multiple numbers were listed, the current figures were used for these calculations.

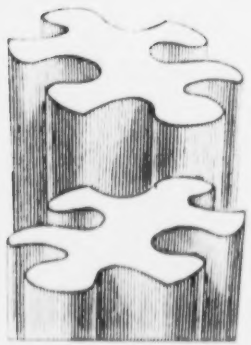
Only one responding school outside of California had a student population of more than 500. Some schools in several other states indicated plans to serve larger numbers of students eventually. Current school sizes were used for this table.

Outside of California, the average school has only 140 students.

3 HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN OPERATION?[11]

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Not yet open	6	4	17	3	0	0	3	33
One year	21	6	0	7	8	2	2	46
Two years	13	4	0	5	1	0	3	26
Three years	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
Other	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

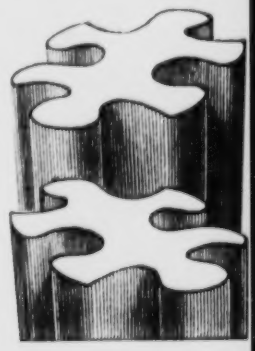
Charter schools are new, and the survey respondents present a fairly accurate picture of the range of approved schools for the first three years of the charter school movement.



[11] Several schools claimed to have been in operation since before charter school legislation was approved in their state. These answers often reflected how long the school had been in operation as a pre-existing public or private school. Where possible, surveys were examined to determine the length of operation as an approved charter school.

4 WHAT IS THE APPROXIMATE PERCENTAGE OF THE ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF YOUR STUDENT BODY?

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
African American	9%[1]	4%	17%	15%	19%	1%	11%	10%
Caucasian	54%	79%	48%	58%	70%	32%	84%	60%
Native American	1%	<1%	1%	16%	2%	2%	<1%	4%
Hispanic	28%	15%	28%	3%	7%	61%	2%	19%
Pacific Rim	6%	1%	3%	7%	2%	3%	1%	5%
Other	<1%	0%	3%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%



[1] These numbers reflect the average ethnic mix for charter schools in these states. Columns do not add to 100% because of rounding and because many schools reported figures that did not add to 100%.

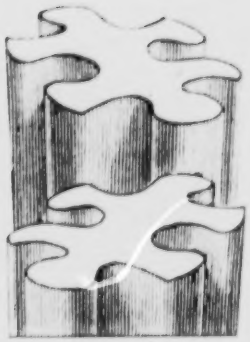
5 WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR STUDENTS ARE FROM OUTSIDE THE LOCAL DISTRICT?[13]

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
0%	11	2	8	2	0	0	7	30
0-5%	14	5	1	2	2	3	0	27
6-10%	3	0	1	2	0	0	0	6
10-50%	4	4	1	5	4	0	1	19
50+%	9	0	4	3	3	0	0	19

Because charter schools are by definition "schools of choice," one measure of their attractiveness is their ability to draw students from other districts. However, differences in state law influence the ability of charter schools to draw students from outside their local district.

In a majority of schools, less than 5% of the students come from outside the local district. Thirty-eight schools get more than 10% of their students from outside the local district. Nineteen schools get more than half of their students from outside the local district.

The small number and size of charter schools limits increases in participation in school choice for a given state. However, charter schools serve a significant portion of students who have gone out of their way to exercise choice.

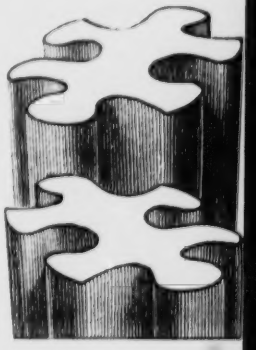


[13] Several schools commented that they were their "own district" and listed varying percentages. Respondents may have had varying definitions of district in mind when responding to this question.

6 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STUDENTS IS YOUR SCHOOL DESIGNED TO SERVE? CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Cross-section of students	29	10	12	10	6	2	5	74
Artistically inclined	13	1	1	2	3	1	3	24
Learning disabled	14	4	5	5	3	2	5	38
Physically disabled	9	1	2	2	2	1	2	19
At-risk	23	5	8	8	3	2	7	56
Gifted and talented	17	4	4	4	4	2	4	39
Home-schooled[14]	12	2	2	2	2	0	2	22

These numbers reflect the total number of schools, not percentages of schools. The overwhelming majority of respondents indicated their school was designed to serve all kids. This inclusiveness is reasonable given the statutory expectations for charter schools. However, some opponents have claimed charter schools are designed to serve privileged children with elite academies. It is important to note that 56 schools were designed to serve at-risk youth, while 38 respondents said their schools were designed to serve learning-disabled students.



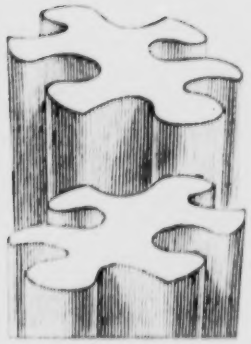
[14] Respondents from several schools that indicated they serve home-schooled students strongly emphasized that they intend to serve all children in their school. The issue of home schooling is further addressed in Item 7.

7 IF YOUR SCHOOL SERVES HOME-SCHOOLED STUDENTS, WHERE ARE THEY SERVED? AT HOME OR IN YOUR SCHOOL?

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Home-schooled students served in school[15]	12	3	3	4	2	0	0	24
Home-school students served at home	10	0	0	1	1	0	2	14

The issue of home-schooled students receiving support through the charter process is more complicated than a single question on a broad survey can reflect. Many schools that serve home-schooled students note they are trying to bring home-schooling families back into the public education system. The state context for home schooling also deserves attention. In California, substantial numbers of districts are competing for funds available for "serving" families that home-school their children.

These factors aside, it is important to note that more than 20 schools were said to be designed to serve home-schooled students, and that 14 schools serve these students at home. If charter schools are to satisfy the requirements for public education and serve home-schooled students, then the issue of whether or not home schooling can be designed to reflect the values of public education and visa versa must be addressed.

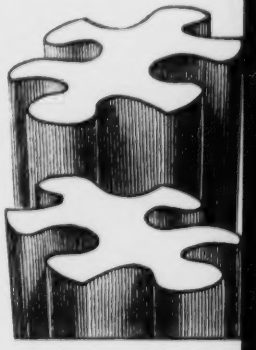


[15] This figure most likely represents families who home-school their children for part of the time and then bring them to the school for certain services, as well as those who have returned to the school system after home-schooling.

8 HOW MUCH MONEY DID YOU HAVE FOR START-UP ACTIVITIES?

In thousands of dollars	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Mean	$5(21)[16]	$17	$37	$48	$14	$10	$224[17]	$21[18]
0	30	9	4	6	8	1	1	60
0-5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
5-20	3	2	0	1	0	2	1	9
20-60	1	2	9	6	0	0	0	18
60-100	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	7
100+	1	0	1	2	0	0	3	7
Other	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

When commenting on the barriers to operating a charter school, respondents cited lack of start-up funds as the primary barrier. It is interesting to note the broad range of resources available to schools thus far in the different states. The close district involvement in Wisconsin clearly has led to increased district resources. However, California and New Mexico charter school operators did not have such ready access to district money even though their legislation ties charter schools to local districts. Legal uncertainty can frustrate efforts to raise funds from foundations and corporations. In Michigan, the relatively recent passage of charter school legislation and concurrent legal uncertainty likely contributed to the lower availability of start-up funds there.



[16] One school listed $600,000 in start-up funds. If that school is excluded, the mean start-up funding for California charter schools was $5,400.

[17] The definition of start-up funds may have varied considerably in the minds of survey respondents. Wisconsin's schools are approved, designed and run by local districts. Possibly the large amount of start-up funds listed reflects the first-year funds for schools and includes what other states would have considered operating expenses.

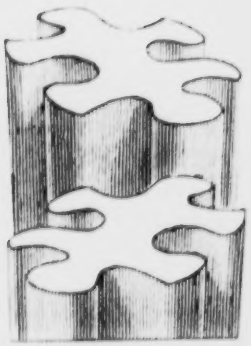
[18] Discounting Wisconsin and California's single $600,000 school, the average school's start-up funds were around $20,000. Including exceptionally well-funded schools, it was more than $40,000.

Several groups commented that start-up funds came from their own pockets.

The question of start-up funds needs to be addressed in greater detail and with more precision. The definitions and uses of start-up funds will shape the answers to such questions in the future.

9 WHERE DID YOU GET YOUR START-UP FUNDS? CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Legislature	1	1	7	3	0	2	1	15
Foundations	5	3	5	4	0	0	1	18
Corporations	4	0	4	7	0	0	0	15
None	18	3	3	5	3	0	1	33
Other[10]	10	4	5	6	6	0	5	36

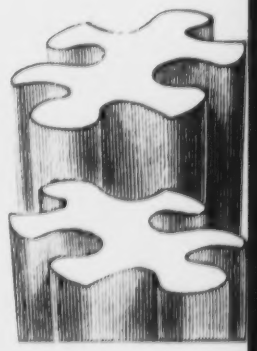


[10] "Other" was used primarily to describe money from local districts or loans from banks.

10 HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THE ACADEMIC FOCUS OF YOUR CHARTER SCHOOL? CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total	Rank
Back to basics	13	6	6	7	4	0	1	37	3*
College preparation	9	7	7	3	3	0	1	30	7
Civics	11	4	9	7	3	1	2	37	3
Arts	15	4	7	5	4	1	0	36	5
Sciences	13	2	6	4	5	1	1	32	6
Integrated curriculum/ interdisciplinary	15	9	17	15	7	3	7	73	1
Vocational	5	1	3	4	0	0	3	16	10
Gifted and talented	9	3	1	1	2	0	1	17	9
Technology	22	7	5	8	1	1	5	49	2
Other	3	5	5	5	5	1	2	26	8

It is interesting to note that charter schools rank technology as a primary focus (number two), given the limited resources available to these schools. This ranking may indicate that charter school officials believe traditional schools are not paying enough attention to technology. In California, which ranks 46th among the states in students per computer, according to the U.S. Government Accounting Office, technology is far and above the most cited academic focus for charter schools. Regardless of the solutions they find, California charter schools are focusing on a recognized shortcoming of traditional public schools in the state.



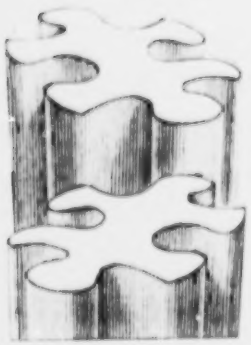
* Given the legislative intent of creating innovative schools, it is interesting that the combined totals for back to basics instruction and college preparatory are the second most listed areas of focus. If one combined back to basics with college prep, the total would be 67 schools, practically tied for first choice. Although selecting this combination was not an option for respondents, the college prep curriculum in secondary schools may share characteristics with the back to basics curriculum used in elementary and middle schools. In such case, the difference in terms can reflect changes in the ages of students served, rather than pedagogical differences. However, respondents from many schools engaged in innovative reforms and not using a back to basics curriculum would argue their school also is designed to prepare students to go to college.

11 IS YOUR SCHOOL MODELED UPON ANY OF THE FOLLOWING? CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Accelerated Schools	4	0	1	2	1	1	0	9
Carnegie Middle Schools	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Coalition of Essential Schools	4	2	9	1	1	1	1	19
Community Learning Centers	5	1	5	6	0	1	3	21
Core Knowledge	3	1	3	1	0	0	1	9
Foxfire	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	4
Montessori	3	0	0	3	1	0	0	7
Paideia	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	6
Other	14	1	12	6	4	0	3	40

This question pertains largely to the schools' perception of modeling. The networks in question may have no interaction with these schools and may not consider them to be "member" schools. In fact, representatives from the Coalition of Essential Schools commented that several of the Massachusetts schools listing coalition affiliation were not member schools. Similarly, the Minnesota-based group, Community Learning Centers, does not maintain relationships with some of the schools indicating an affiliation with their model.

Also, many schools indicated multiple affiliations — some as many as four or five different models. Given the demanding nature of these designs, it is unlikely the schools have embraced multiple models; rather, they may be taking bits and pieces from different models and creating new models of their own.



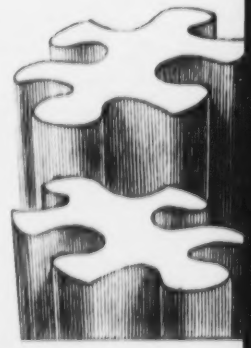
12 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBE THE REASONS FOR CHARTERING YOUR SCHOOL? RANK THE TOP THREE.

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total	Rank
Better teaching and learning for all kids	80	18	21	27	21	5	10	182	1
Run a school according to certain principles and/or philosophy	24	19	26	16	9	2	6	102	2
Autonomy from administration	28	13	8	9	3	3	1	65	6
More parental control	26	6	18	14	4	3	7	78	4
Serve special populations	8	8	3	2	4	0	5	30	7
Innovation	44	11	14	14	8	2	9	102	2
Serve at-risk youth	26	6	14	12	4	3	7	72	5
Other	5	6	5	5	3	0	0	24	8

The numbers for each category were derived by weighing the rank given each subject: three points for a first ranking, two for a second and one point for a third ranking. The number one reason for opening charter schools was to provide better teaching and learning for all students. Beyond this broadly shared value, there were minor differences in motivation between the states.

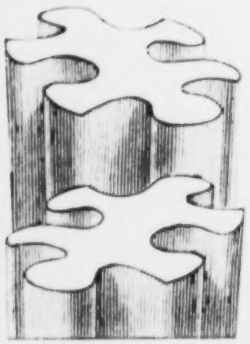
In California, where schools have less autonomy from local districts than in many of the other states, respondents ranked autonomy from central administration higher than respondents in other states where charter schools have more autonomy.

In an earlier question, more than half the respondents said their school was designed to serve at-risk youth. However, the fact that serving at-risk youth was only the fifth highest-ranked reason for chartering the school indicates this is not the primary reason for these schools' operations.



13 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PARTNERS WERE INVOLVED IN DESIGNING YOUR SCHOOL? CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Higher education	7	5	11	3	1	2	4	33
Business	10	2	8	2	1	2	5	30
City or town government	6	2	4	2	0	1	2	17
Interested community members	18	9	17	10	5	3	5	67
Parents	32	13	15	13	5	3	6	87
Teachers	36	9	13	14	4	2	6	84
Service agencies	3	1	8	3	2	2	4	23
Community groups	8	3	9	1	0	1	4	26
Students	10	3	6	4	3	1	3	30
Other	6	1	4	2	5	0	2	20



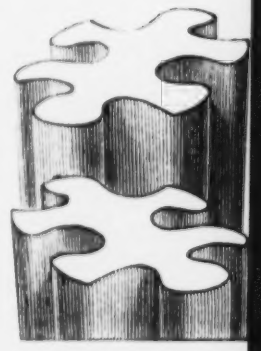
While all states list parents, teachers and interested community members as frequent partners, Massachusetts stands out as the state with the greatest number of other people as partners in the development of charter schools. This fact may reflect the relative independence of the state's approving agency, the secretary of education's office. Former Secretary of Education Piedad Robertson indicated in a telephone interview that she had emphasized proposals with diverse partners in the selection process.

14 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES THE FACILITY YOU USE?

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
School within a school	6	0	0	1	0	0	1	8
Vacant school	4	8	0	4	1	0	1	18
Leased space in a nonprofit facility	5	2	3	5	5	0	1	21
Leased commercial space	8	4	4	4	1	0	1	22
Donated space	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
Purchased space	0	0	1	0	2	1	2	6
Other	12[1]	1	8	1	1	2	1	26

Even with the large number of "write-in" answers reflecting the conversion of pre-existing public schools, a significant number of respondents (18 schools) did not answer this question. Rather than pointing toward the great diversity of options available for the location of charter schools, these data, combined with information on the barriers for charter schools, indicate a critical problem for the charter school movement. Securing affordable, safe, quality facilities is a herculean task for many people interested in organizing a charter school.

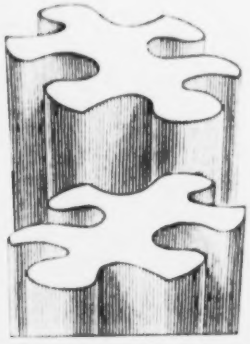
On the other hand, the variety of places charter schools operate in may offer an important lesson for public education. There are a number of examples of shared facilities and leasing commercial space. Charters offer another way of thinking about the kind of facility that can be used to house a school.



[1] All of these responses indicated the conversion of an existing public school. Other respondents from other states also listed conversion schools but not as uniformly.

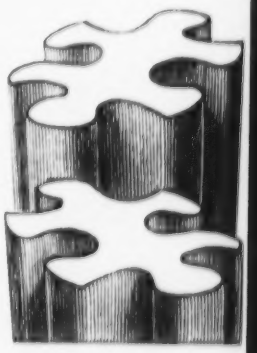
15 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SERVICES DOES YOUR SCHOOL OFFER? CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Social services	10	2	9	3	3	1	5	33
Health care	7	1	8	7	2	2	4	31
Apprenticeships	5	1	8	4	2	1	1	22
Mentoring programs	20	7	14	8	0	1	6	56
Tutoring	30	8	15	11	6	3	6	79
Off-campus sites	15	5	5	5	0	0	2	32
After and/or before school care	18	5	12	6	4	1	2	48
Special education	27	13	11	11	5	2	5	74
Other	1	3	3	1	3	0	1	12



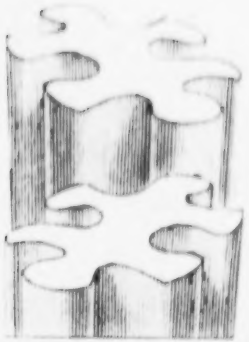
16 DOES YOUR SCHOOL CONTRACT FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SERVICES? CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Meals	6	7	8	9	3	0	1	34
Transportation	8	4	6	7	0	0	2	27
Legal	13	2	6	8	6	0	1	36
Janitorial services	11	7	3	7	4	0	1	33
Extracurricular	6	5	3	4	1	0	0	19
Accounting/other business operations	17	5	8	12	7	0	1	50
None	7	2	0	3	1	2	4	19
Other	4	3	2	4	1	1	0	15



17 HOW MANY CERTIFIED TEACHERS WORK AT YOUR SCHOOL?

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
1-5 certified teachers	10[22]	4	4	6	8	1	5	38
6-10	7	5	3	4	5	0	1	25
11-15	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	5
16-20	1	1	0	2	0	0	1	5
20+	20	1	1	0	0	2	1	25
Mean number of certified teachers per school	19.3	9.8	8.0[23]	7.2	5	31[24]	8.3	12.6[25]



One school said it has no certified teachers.

One school estimated it would have 28 teachers. Without that school, the mean is a little more than five teachers per school.

One school has 89 teachers, one has 31 and the other only three.

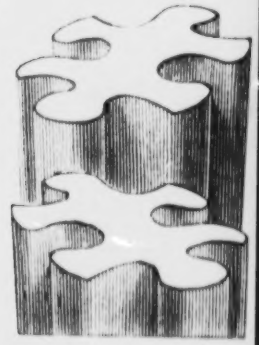
Without California, the mean would be 9.4 certified teachers per school.

18 HOW MANY PARAPROFESSIONALS WORK AT YOUR SCHOOL?

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
0	10	4	1		4	1	2	24
0-5	8	6	4	10	4	1	4	37
6-10	6	1	2	1	2	0	1	16
10+	14	1	1	0	0	1	1	18
Mean	12.2	2.4	5.6	4	2.5	3.7*	3.6	6.6*

*One school had eight, one three and one had no paraprofessional.

Without California, the average number of paraprofessionals at each school would be 3.2.



19 ARE THERE ANY PEOPLE WHO WERE HIRED TO TEACH BECAUSE OF EXPERTISE IN THEIR FIELD WHO WERE NOT CERTIFIED TEACHERS?[28]

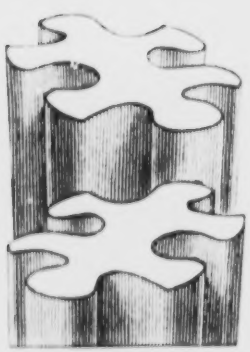
	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM*	WI	Total
Yes	24	8	12	10	4	1	4	63
No	15	3	0	6	6	1	1	32
Not yet**	0	0	2	0	0	1	3	6

20 ARE ALL OF YOUR ADMINISTRATORS CERTIFIED?

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Yes	32	3	3	3	9	3	5	58
No	8	11	10	9	1	0	2	41

Many of the charter schools may not have a certified administrator equivalent to a principal. Respondents may have interpreted questions 20 and 22 in different ways.

Many respondents indicated they had a lead teacher who was certified. It is not clear whether such administrators are certified as teachers or as principals.



*The discrepancy in the answers between questions 19 and 21 illustrates the vagaries of self-reported survey data. Many respondents wrote in question 19 that their uncertified personnel taught music, art or P.E. Perhaps when answering question 21, respondents did not consider these people "teachers."

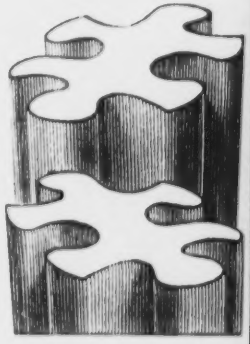
**While "Not yet" was not an official answer, it was a frequent note in the margin of respondents. It is likely that many other respondents would have selected "Not yet" if it had been listed as an option.

21 ARE ALL OF YOUR TEACHERS CERTIFIED?

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Yes	23	7	0	12	7	2	7	58
No	16	6	9	3	2	1	1	38
No answer or ambiguous	4	1	5	1	2	1	1	15

22 IF YOU HAVE NO ADMINISTRATORS, HOW DO YOU "ADMINISTER" ACTIVITIES?

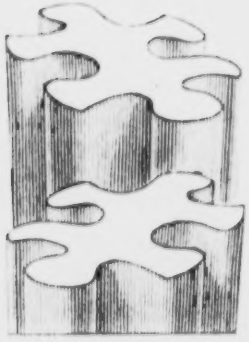
	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Lead teacher	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	9
Committee of teachers	3	0	1	3	0	0	0	7
Committee of all staff	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	6
Other	3	0	3	5	0	0	1	12



23 ON A SCALE OF 1-10, 10 BEING THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF INDEPENDENCE, HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR SCHOOL'S FREEDOM TO CONTROL ITS OWN OPERATIONS?

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Perceived independence	7.9	8.4	9.5	9.3	8.2	8.0	5.9	8.4

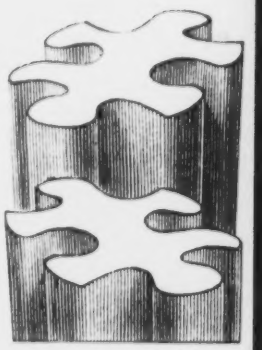
The ranking of the states' perceived independence matches what several observers would have predicted, given the nature of the relationships between charter schools and local districts. Massachusetts and Minnesota have some of the most independent schools, while Wisconsin, New Mexico and California have many schools that were either converted from existing pubic schools or are run by local districts. In Colorado, charter schools often are started by groups outside the local district but are unable to break away from district influence.



24 WHAT ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS ARE YOU USING? CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.

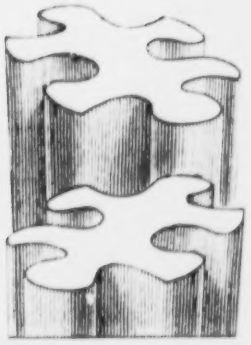
	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Standardized tests	33	13	13	14	9	3	5	90
State assessment program	19	2	15	5	8	1	7	57
Performance-based tests	26	7	8	7	6	0	7	61
Student portfolios	34	12	14	13	9	3	8	93
Student demonstration of mastery	28	8	13	8	7	2	8	74
Parent satisfaction surveys	29	9	14	10	5	2	6	75
Student interviews	18	2	13	8	3	0	6	50
Indicators such as attendance	27	8	17	12	8	0	7	79
Other	4	0	5	4	1	0	3	17

Charter school operators list a remarkable array of mechanisms to report their progress.



25 AT PRESENT, WHAT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE TO YOU? (IDENTIFY SUPPLIERS)

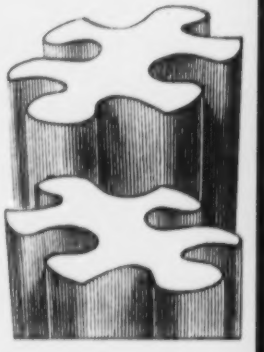
	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Financial	19	7	9	7	4	2	5	53
Technical	14	8	8	6	4	2	6	48
Curricular	23	3	11	4	5	1	6	53
Community involvement	13	3	7	5	1	1	2	32
Legislative	9	3	8	2	4	0	4	30
Legal	20	10	13	4	7	0	5	59
None	8	0	1	2	0	0	1	12
Other	0	1	2	5	1	0	1	10



26 WHAT ADDITIONAL SUPPORT DO YOU NEED?

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Financial	18	7	11	11	6	1	3	57
Technical	9	3	3	10	3	1	1	30
Curricular	6	3	1	7	2	1	1	21
Community involvement	8	4	1	6	3	1	1	24
Legislative	8	5	5	8	4	1	0	31
Legal	11	3	3	5	4	1	1	28
None	5	1	2	0	2	1	1	12
Other	2	3	4	4	2	0	1	16[6]

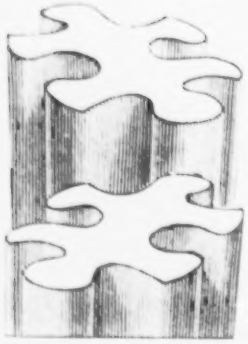
Clearly, charter school operators feel they need legislative relief to overcome the barriers before them. While it is not surprising they would find many critical issues that need addressing, it is interesting they would seek legislative solutions to these issues.



[6] The most frequently requested services were public relations help and other community relations assistance, as well as help working with district officials. Curriculum and pedagogical issues were mentioned only occasionally.

27 PLEASE RATE THE LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY IN OVERCOMING EACH OF THE FOLLOWING BARRIERS TO ESTABLISHING AND OPERATING YOUR SCHOOL, NUMBER 1 BEING THE THINGS THAT WERE NOT AT ALL DIFFICULT TO OVERCOME AND 5 BEING THOSE THAT WERE MOST DIFFICULT TO OVERCOME.

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total	Rank
Teacher certification regulations	52	7	15	23	13	2	15	127*	9
Collective bargaining agreements	95	17	11	20	13	5	19	180	7
Internal process/conflict	91	32	26	46	11	0	31	237	4
Hiring Staff	74	22	18	39	11	0	12	176	8
Lack of start up funds	110	37	68	61	38	0	28	342	1
Facilities	88	43	59	53	29	4	26	302	3
Finances	112	33	61	65	38	3	17	329	2
Accountability Requirements	68	21	30	44	11	0	17	191	6
Health and safety regulations	52	28	30	45	21	0	17	193	5



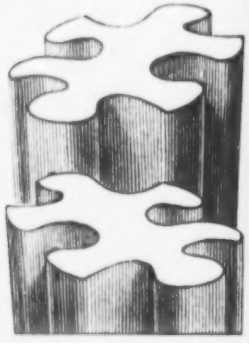
The preceding scores were derived by adding the numbers (from 1 to 5) that each school respondent gave for each potential obstacle in each state.

The primary barriers are similar for most states. For all the states, issues over money and buildings are central: start-up funds, finances and facilities were the top three issues. States with larger numbers of converted public schools, notably California and New Mexico, had less trouble with facilities and finances. In states where existing buildings are used more often by charter schools, issues dealing with people become more important. In California and New Mexico, internal process, collective bargaining units and teacher certification take on greater importance.

Individual state totals for each category provide a good measure of comparison of issues from state to state. For example, although collective bargaining agreements ranked seventh across the states surveyed, it was third in California.

28 IF A STATE LEGISLATOR ASKED YOUR ADVICE AS HE OR SHE ESTABLISHED THE LEGAL GUIDELINES FOR CREATING A CHARTER SCHOOL, WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE?

	CA	CO	MA	MN	MI	NM	WI	Total
Make the legislation clear[1]	13	1	5	3	4	1	0	27
Provide start-up funds	5	5	4	3	5	0	0	22
Provide significant autonomy for the school	14	4	4	8	1	0	3	34
Provide financial and management assistance	6	0	3	1	2	0	0	12

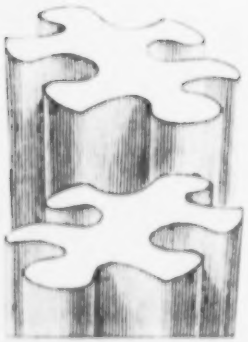


[1] Respondents urged that charter legislation clearly specify critical details regarding issues such as funding, approval process, participation in state pension programs, transportation arrangements, provisions for handicapped youngsters, building requirements, waiver of special rules and regulations, and who in the state is responsible for working with charters and interpreting the law.

Respondents recommended the state permit charters to be approved by some group other than the local district, that local districts not be allowed to veto charter proposals or pressure charter schools to accept certain arrangements, that charter schools not be bound to accept local labor-management agreements, and that charters not have to go to local districts or town boards to negotiate financial arrangements.

29 WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHERS WHO ARE CONSIDERING CREATING A CHARTER SCHOOL?

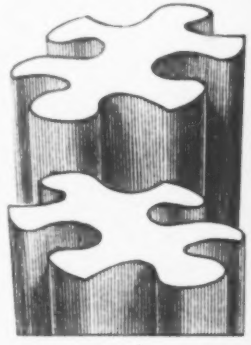
	CA	CO	MA	MI	MN	NM	WI	Total
Establish clear vision, mission, philosophy to which all are committed	10	2	4	2	5	1	1	25
Give yourself plenty of time to plan	9	2	0	0	3	0	1	15
Be prepared to work hard	6	2	0	2	2	0	0	12
Look for partners with special expertise; don't try to do everything yourself	1	0	2	0	4	1	3	11
Visit other charters	2			2	4	0	0	8
Raise as much money as you can for start-up	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	5
Hire experienced teachers and administrators	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	4
Study local politics	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
Work out facilities issues	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	3
Start small and grow	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2



Twenty school representatives also advised others to "go for it" or "do it."

30 IF YOU COULD BEGIN AGAIN, WHAT IS THE ONE THING YOU WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY?

	CA	CO	MA	MI	MN	NM	WI	Total
Give ourselves sufficient lead/planning time to develop curriculum and philosophy	6	5	1	2	1	0	3	18
Spend more time communicating with parents	3	0	0	0	2	0	3	8
Start small and get operation going well, then expand	2	1	0	1	2	0	0	6
Work hard for independence from local labor-management rules	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
Provide more information to the community	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	6
Work out facilities issues	2	1	0	3	0	0	0	6
Raise more money for start-up	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	4
Hire secretary immediately	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Hire more experienced staff	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
Clearly define staff roles	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

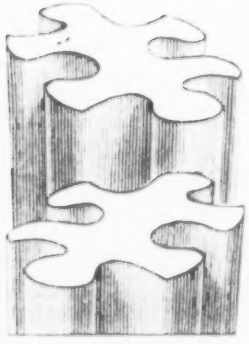


MAJOR OBSERVATIONS ON THE DATA FROM THE CENTER FOR SCHOOL CHANGE

There is a strong interest among educators in accepting the challenge charter legislation offers. Originally, some people questioned whether any educators were willing to be held accountable. The answer clearly is "yes."

In every state, educators have stepped forward who are willing to work with youngsters from troubled backgrounds in urban, rural and suburban areas. Some people feared that few educators would want to work with youngsters from low-income and otherwise disadvantaged backgrounds. The majority of charter schools are designed to work with a cross-section of students (including young people from troubled backgrounds). About half of the charter schools responding are explicitly designed to serve disadvantaged and at-risk youth.

The schools are using a variety of academic approaches. The most frequently cited instructional philosophy is "interdisciplinary." But many other philosophies are mentioned.



Most frequent suggestions to legislators were:

1. Allow charter schools real autonomy by making them their own districts; remove requirements related to follow local district work rules; allow them to get funds directly from the state, rather than through local districts; and allow more than one organization to grant charters.
2. Make the law clear and provide someone in the state who has the power to cut through bureaucracy.
3. Provide start-up funds.
4. Provide legal and other technical assistance to people wishing to establish charter schools.

The variety of places charter schools operate is an important lesson for public education. There are a number of examples of shared facilities, as well as leasing in commercial space. Billions have been invested in creating public school buildings that generally are off by themselves. Charters offer another way of thinking about the kind of facility that can be used.

APPENDIX A

EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE STATES and CENTER FOR SCHOOL CHANGE SURVEY OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

Thank you for completing the following survey. You can fax responses to ECS, Attn: Alex Medler at 303-296-8332; or you can mail your survey to ECS, 707 17th Street, Suite 2700, Denver, CO 80202-3427. If you have any questions, please contact Alex Medler at ECS at 303-299-3635, or Joe Nathan at the Center for School Change, 612-625-3506. Feel free to attach additional sheets as necessary.

Name and Address of School

_____

_____

_____

_____

Primary Contact, Name and Number

_____

_____

_____

_____

Relationship of Respondent to School

_____

(1) What grades does your school include?

(2) How many students are in your school?

(3) How long have you been in operation?
- (A) Not yet open
- (B) One year
- (C) Two years
- (D) Three years

Demographics

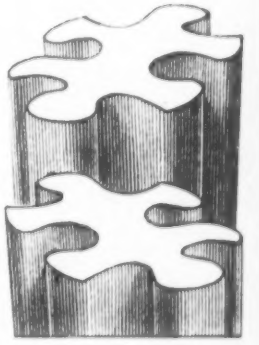
(4) What is the approximate percentage of the composition of your student body?
- (A) African American ____%
- (B) Hispanic ____%
- (C) Caucasian ____%
- (D) Pacific Rim ____%
- (E) Native American ____%
- (F) Other _____

(5) What percentage of your students are from:
- (A) The school district in which your school is located _____
- (B) Outside the local district _____

(6) Compared to your district, what percentage of your students can be described as the following: (Please give the name and phone number of someone in your local district):

	School	District
(A) Students of color	_____	_____
(B) Receive free or reduced price lunch	_____	_____
(C) Bilingual	_____	_____

District contact and telephone number: _____



(7) Which of the following students is your school designed to serve? Circle all that apply.
(A) Cross-section of students
(B) Artistically inclined
(C) Learning disabled
(D) Physically disabled
(E) At-risk youth
(F) Gifted and talented

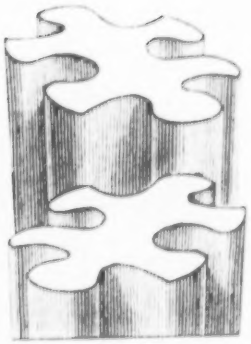
(8) If you serve home-schooled students, where do they receive services?
(A) In their homes
(B) In our school

School Focus and Design

(9) What are your sources of ongoing funds?
(A) State funds ____%
(B) Other _____

(10) How much money did you have for start-up activities? $_____

(11) Where did you get start-up funds? Circle all that apply.
(A) Legislature
(B) Foundations
(C) Corporations
(D) None
(E) Other



(12) How would you characterize the academic focus of your charter school? Circle all that apply.
(A) Back to basics
(B) College prep
(C) Civics/service learning
(D) Arts
(E) Sciences
(F) Integrated curriculum/interdisciplinary
(G) Vocational
(H) Gifted and talented
(I) Technology
(J) Other_____

(13) Is your school modeled upon any of the following? Circle all that apply.
(A) Accelerated Schools
(B) Carnegie Middle Schools
(C) Coalition of Essential Schools
(D) Community Learning Centers
(E) Core Knowledge
(F) Foxfire
(G) Montessori
(H) Paideia
(I) Other

(14) Which of the following best describe the reason for chartering your school? (Rank the top three.)
- (A) To provide better teaching and learning for all kinds of kids ____
- (B) To develop a school based on certain principles or philosophy ____
- (C) To have more autonomy from central administration ____
- (D) To give parents more control over governance of the school ____
- (E) To provide services for a particular population (e.g. hearing impaired) ____
- (F) To explore innovative ways of operating a school ____
- (G) To provide better teaching and learning for at-risk students ____
- (H) Other (please explain) ____

(15) Which of the following partners were involved in developing your school? Circle all that apply.
- (A) Higher education
- (B) Business
- (C) City or town government
- (D) Interested community members
- (E) Parents
- (F) Teachers
- (G) Service agencies
- (H) Community groups
- (I) Students
- (J) Other _____

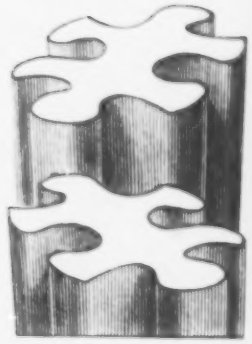
Facilities

(16) Which of the following best describes the facility you use?
- (A) School within a school
- (B) Vacant school
- (C) Leased space in a nonprofit facility
- (D) Leased commercial space
- (E) Donated space
- (F) Purchased space
- (G) Other _____

School Services

(17) Which of the following services does your school offer? Circle all that apply.
- (A) Social services
- (B) Health care
- (C) Apprenticeships
- (D) Mentoring programs
- (E) Tutoring
- (F) Off-campus sites
- (G) After and/or before school care
- (H) Special education
- (I) Other _____

(18) Does your school contract for any of the following services? Circle all that apply.
- (A) Meals
- (B) Transportation
- (C) Legal
- (D) Janitorial services
- (E) Extracurricular
- (F) Accounting/other business operations
- (G) None
- (H) Other _____



Faculty and Staff

(19) How many certified teachers work at your school?

(20) How many paraprofessionals work at your school?

(21) Are there any people who were hired to teach because of their expertise in their field who were not certified teachers?

(22) Are all of your administrators certified?
(A) Yes
(B) No

(23) Are all of your teachers certified?
(A) Yes
(B) No

(24) If you have no administrators, how do you "administer" activities?
(A) Lead teacher
(B) Committee of teachers
(C) Committee of all staff
(D) Other, please specify

Governance and Accountability

(25) On a scale of 1-10, 10 being the highest level of independence, how would you rate your school's freedom to control its own operations?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(26) In creating your charter school, did you apply for any waivers from **state** regulations, and if so, which ones?

(27) In creating your charter school, did you apply for any waivers from **local** rules or contracts, and if so, which ones?

(28) Does your state law automatically wave state regulations for your school?

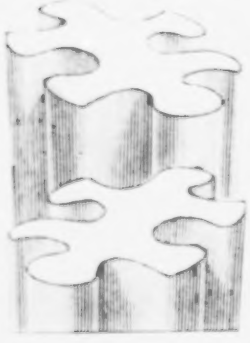
(29) What accountability mechanisms are you using? Circle all that apply.
(A) Standardized Tests
(B) State Assessment Program
(C) Performance-Based Tests
(D) Student Portfolios
(E) Students' Demonstration of Mastery
(F) Parent Satisfaction Surveys
(G) Student Interviews
(H) Indicators such as attendance, attitudes towards school
(I) Other_____

(30) What board, group or organizations are you accountable to for student achievement (e.g., state board, local board or other chartering agency)?

(31) What board, group or organizations are you accountable to for fiscal affairs?

Technical Assistance Needs

(32) At present, what technical assistance is available to you? (Identify suppliers.)
(A) Financial
(B) Technical
(C) Curricular
(D) Community involvement
(E) Legislative
(F) Legal
(G) None
(H) Other



(33) What additional support do you need?

(A) Financial
(B) Technical
(C) Curricular
(D) Community Involvement
(E) Legislative
(F) Legal
(G) None
(H) Other _____

Barriers to Creating a Charter School

(34) Please rate the level of difficulty in overcoming **each** of the following barriers to establishing and operating your school, number 1 being the things that were not at all difficult to overcome, and 5 being those that were most difficult to overcome.

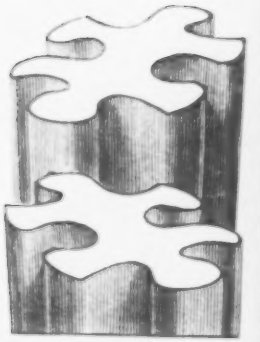
(A) Teacher certification regulations ____
(B) Collective bargaining agreements ____
(C) Internal process/conflict ____
(D) Hiring staff ____
(E) Lack of start up funds ____
(F) Facilities ____
(G) Finances ____
(H) Accountability requirements ____
(I) Health and safety regulations ____
(J) Other ____

(35) If a state legislator asked your advice as he or she established the legal guidelines for creating a charter school, what advice would you give?

(36) What advice would you give to others who are considering creating a charter school?

(37) What is the best thing your school has done in its design or operations?

(38) If you could begin again, what is the one thing you would do differently?



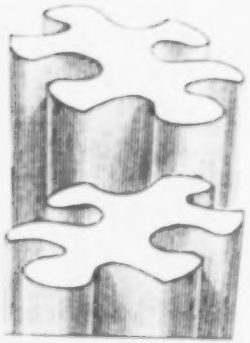
APPENDIX B

The following is excerpted from the April 1995 *Policy Brief*, "Charter School Update & Observations Regarding Initial Trends and Impacts," from the Morrison Institute for Public Policy, School of Public Affairs, Arizona State University. The brief was written by Louann A. Bierlein and Lori A. Mulholland.

What is Happening in the Initial Charter School States?

As of April 1, 1995, 12 states had passed charter school-type legislation. Each law is different, and only a few come close to supporting the creation of completely "pure" charter schools. The following table depicts existing charter school states according to the strength of their law (e.g., whether sponsors other than local boards are allowed, if automatic state law/rule exemptions are granted, the degree of fiscal and legal autonomy allowed).

"Stronger" Charter Laws	"Weaker" Charter-like Laws
Arizona ('94)	Georgia ('93)
California ('92)	Hawaii ('94)
Colorado ('93)	Kansas ('94)
Massachusetts ('93)	New Mexico ('93)
Michigan ('94/95)	Wisconsin ('93)
Minnesota ('91)	Wyoming ('95)



States with Stronger Charter Laws

California. In September 1992, California adopted the nation's second charter-schools law. The law allows up to 100 charter schools and permits any individual to initiate a charter-school petition. Potential sponsors include the local school district or, if an appeal is sought, the applicable county board of education. Entire districts also may apply for charter status. By law, California charter schools are financially autonomous, though funds continue to flow through the district to the school, and charter schools often contract with their districts to provide some services. The extent of each school's legal autonomy is determined within its charter.

Colorado. Legislation passed in June 1993 permits up to 50 charter schools to be created prior to July 1997. Afterward, the ceiling is removed. Under the law, any individual or group can enter into a charter-school agreement with a local school board if "adequate" support from parents, teachers and pupils is obtained. A charter school remains under the legal authority of the district board but is to receive at least 80% of normal per-pupil funding from the district.

As of April 1, 1995, 25 charter schools had been approved by local boards, with 14 of these in operation (two began in 1993-94, 12 others in 1994-95). There are also several known applications pending and several potential appeals to the state board (which can require local boards to grant charters if no valid reasons for denial exists). Several charter bills are pending, with the possibility of at least some technical corrections being passed.

Massachusetts: Legislation enacted in 1993 permits 25 public charter schools to be established. Each may be organized by two or more certified teachers, 10 or more parents or by any other individual or group that successfully enters into a charter agreement with the state secretary of education (note: existing private schools are not allowed to apply). Legal and financial autonomy is granted automatically to charter schools. By law, charter schools are not authorized to begin until the school year 1995-96.

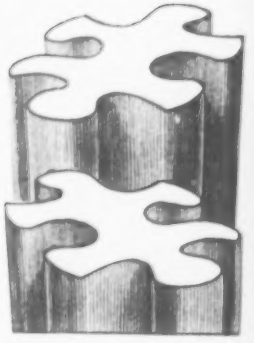
As of April 4, 1995, a total of 21 schools had received approval (14 during the first round of applications and seven having just received approval); 17 schools are slated to begin during fall 1995. Legislation including technical revisions and a change to how schools are funded is expected to pass (i.e., the state deducts money from districts' allocation, rather than charter schools billing the districts).

Michigan: This state's initial charter law was passed in December 1993 and declared unconstitutional less than one year later as part of a lawsuit brought by, among others, the teachers' union and several state board members. In its finding, a county circuit court found the law usurped the state board's power to supervise public education and that charter schools were legally not "public." State legislators moved quickly to pass new charter-school legislation (effective April 1, 1995) which addresses the key issues brought forth in the suit. However, an appeal of that court decision is pending. According to legislation, if the lower court's decision is overturned, then the initial law (with minor modifications) will supersede the new law.

Michigan's new law allows organizers (any individual or entity) to continue to choose from four potential sponsoring bodies: local governing boards of larger school districts, intermediate school district boards, community colleges and state public universities (although universities are now limited to chartering no more than 75 schools statewide). Charter schools become legally and financially autonomous. There is still some unclarity as to whether such schools are exempted from most state laws and rules.

To date, eight schools (approved under the old law) are authorized to receive funding as alternative public schools. As of April 3, 1995, four schools were officially operating under the new charter law (one was part of the group of eight alternative public schools funded). State officials expect another 30-50 schools to be chartered yet this spring.

Minnesota: Building upon existing public school choice programs, Minnesota initiated the first charter schools legislation in 1991. The law initially authorized creation of up to eight legally and financially autonomous schools (referred to as "outcome-based schools") to be organized by certified teachers and sponsored by local school districts. Existing nonsectarian private schools also are allowed to become public charter schools. Minnesota's legislation was modified in 1993 and 1994 to allow up to 35 charter schools across the state. An appeals process was added that in essence would allow the state board of education to sponsor a given school.

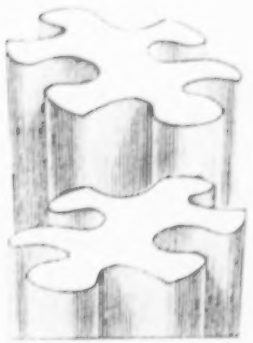


As of April 1, 1995, 17 schools had received approval, with 14 of these in operation (two began in 1992-93, five in 1993-94, six in 1994-95). No legislative changes are anticipated, although a request by the governor for $100,000 to support charter-school start-up costs is pending.

States with "Weaker" Charter Laws

New Mexico: Legislation passed in 1993 allowed the state board of education to grant charter-school status to five existing public schools. These charter schools remain under the legal authority of school districts, and certain administrative costs may be withheld by the districts. During 1993-94, initial planning grants of $5,000 were provided to 10 schools to promote the charter concept. In fall 1994, four schools began operating under charter status, receiving grants of $15,600 to support their first year of implementation.

As of April 1, 1995, (with New Mexico's legislative session complete), no modifications were made to the law. However, an appropriation to provide additional grant funds to approved charter schools was vetoed by the newly elected Republican governor.



Wisconsin: Legislation passed in August 1993 required the state superintendent of education to approve the first 10 charter-school requests received. These charter schools could be created by a local school board generating its own proposal or by an individual submitting a petition signed by either 10% of the teachers in the school district or by 50% of the teachers at one school. A school board could convert all of its schools to charter status (up to a maximum of two per district) if the petition is signed by at least 50% of teachers employed in the district, and if arrangements were made for children not wishing to attend charter schools. Charter schools are exempt from most state laws but remain under local district control. Their level of funding is determined by the charter agreement. Shortly after the legislation passed, 10 district-generated charter-school proposals were approved.

As of April 1, 1995, four (of the potential 20 at two per district) charter schools had began operation. A variety of substantial revisions to the charter law are still under consideration by the legislature.